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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1050
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0921
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 1498
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1376
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2100

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/PPD, R, DRL
PRAGUE PLEASE PASS TO RFE/RL
USAID/W FOR EE/AA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [TX](#)
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: SENATOR LUGAR RAISES RFE/RL
TURKMEN JOURNALISTS' HARASSMENT WITH PRESIDENT
BERDIMUHAMEDOV

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) On January 11, just before the arrival of SFRC Minority Chairman Senator Richard Lugar, Post received e-mail documentation of harassment by Turkmen authorities of three Turkmenistan citizens who report for RFE/RL. Post prepared the information as a non-paper (text in para four below), and Senator Lugar agreed to raise the problem with President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov.

13. (SBU) Later that day, at the end of a cordial and open 75-minute meeting (other issues reported septel), Senator Lugar raised the issue and passed President Berdimuhamedov the non-paper. The president seemed genuinely unaware and said he would look into it. Post will continue to monitor the journalists' situations to see if the harassment abates.

14. (SBU) Begin text of non-paper:

The U.S. Government has received information that three journalists from Radio Liberty are facing harassment by local authorities.

We ask that President Berdimuhamedov, in line with his support for new openness and a desire to meet international standards of democracy and human rights, take a personal interest to insure that these three journalists are able to work without harassment and fear of retribution.

OSMANKULY HALLIYEV: On December 21, 2007, officers of the Lebap Province police department demanded that Halliyev stop his work with Azatlyk Radio (Radio Liberty). The police officers allegedly told him that "he and his family would suffer if he continues reporting for RFE/RL." Since that time, his house has been under constant surveillance. On January 7, 2008, local police officials sent Halliyev's brothers and sisters a letter requesting that they go to the

MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) local office to answer questions. He believes that he will be detained if he leaves his home.

SOLTAN ACHILOVA: On December 7, 2007, Soltan Achilova, a resident of Ashgabat, received a phone call from the Ministry of National Security (MNB), requesting that she appear for questioning by the head of a department. Later, a police official came to her house with an official letter, but she did not accept it, because she was not given a reason. She is concerned that she will be detained if she goes to the MVD (Ministry of Interior) office.

GURBANGULY DURDIKULIYEV: People claiming to be physicians recently visited Gurbanguly Durdikulyev, an RFE/RL reporter in Balkanabat, to remind him that he had been on a list of psychiatric clinic patients and demanded that he stop working for RFE/RL. His telephone has been blocked since January 4, and RFE/RL has been unable to reach him.

End text of non-paper.

15. (U) CODEL Lugar did not have an opportunity to clear this cable but authorized its transmission.
HOAGLAND